



A web time story

History of the Internet about more than cats

I've never been good at remembering birthdays. It's not uncommon for me to extend belated birthday wishes to family and friends days, or even weeks, after the special day has passed. But as someone who writes about the Internet for a living, there's no excuse for me being a year late in wishing the Internet a happy 25th birthday.



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InSites

I would have continued on blissfully unaware that the milestone had passed had I not stumbled upon StoryOfTheWeb.org.uk. The website, created by Welsh technology company Nominet, is an illustrated, animated and condensed history of the World Wide Web.

It was created last year to mark 25 years since Tim Berners-Lee proposed an information management system to link the computers of researchers in different locations so they could share information. His proposal from 1989 is widely considered to be the precursor to what would

become the internet.

Story of the Web takes the form of a vertically scrollable timeline. You can select autoplay, which runs a seemingly unstoppable progression from start to finish at a pace that doesn't allow you to appreciate the site. Or you can manually scroll through it at your leisure, stopping to admire or reread parts as you see fit.

Trip through time

The site features bold colors and graphics along with simple but clever animations that transition from one era of the web to the next. When first visiting the site, you're greeted with an image of an old-style modem with the message "downloading site." You have to wait patiently for what feels like an eternity now but actually would have been pretty quick in the old modem days for the introduction to appear.

There's a timeline marking the years along the left edge of the screen. You can click on a year to jump directly to it. Along the right side is a series of tabs linking to the eight chapters of the story:

- **Introduction**
- **The Early Years**

- **From Boom To Bust**
- **The People-powered Web**
- **Web 2.0**
- **The Multimedia Mobile**
- **Democracy and the Web**
- **2014 and Beyond**

As you scroll down from one chapter to the next, brightly colored panels pass over full-screen photos from the time period in each chapter. The panels contain the year or years covered, a title and a paragraph of text explaining the significant web-related events of the time. Many have animations emphasizing the content.

Each panel also has a little word balloon. You can click on it to share your stories and memories from that particular stage of the web's development, or to read what others have posted.

If you have been working with computers for the last 25 years, as I have, it's a pleasant little stroll down memory lane. It's easy to forget all of the company names and technologies that have come and gone, and some that are still here.

HTML, Mosaic, Yahoo, Netscape, Explorer, Craigslist, Hotmail, Netflix, PayPal, Google, Napster, Wikipedia, blogs, Friendster, MySpace, LinkedIn,

webcams, Skype, Torrent, bandwidth, broadband, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LOL, memes, the cloud, smartphones, Spotify, Instagram, Pinterest, hackers, Wikileaks and selfies are all of the web.

Some had a brief moment in the sun and faded from memory, some have changed history, some are influencing how we work today, and some will be gone tomorrow.

Simple, short story

Story of the Web has one simple mission — to tell you the story of the web. It accomplishes that mission very effectively. It's visually engaging and extremely simple to use. There are a few links tucked into a slideout panel at the bottom right of the screen. You can learn more about Nominet, the World Wide Web Consortium, or download a more thorough PDF version of the web's history.

You can go through the entire site in a half hour. It will spark some memories of days gone by, and you'll learn something new.

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